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CIA Reportedly Taped Oswald

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Washington

The Central Intelligence Agency secretly tape-recorded two telephone conversations between Lee Harvey Oswald and the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico City eight weeks before President Kennedy was shot to death Nov. 22, 1963, government sources familiar with the events said Saturday.

According to the sources, the call to the Soviet Embassy alerted the CIA to the presence of Oswald in Mexico City and the agency warned the FBI on October 10.

There is no indication that the FBI, which was investigating Oswald for his pro-Castro activities ever followed up on the information.

The call to the Cuban Embasssy, the sources said, was not associated with Oswald until after Kennedy's death.

A federal commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren found in September 1964, that Oswald had been acting alone when he shot the President.

The telephone calls reportedly were placed by Oswald on a trip to Mexico City in late September and early October, 1963. The events of this trip have never been fully made public and have been the subject of speculation for more than a decade.

The report of the phone calls is the latest developments in the increasing speculation about the Warren commission's conclusions. Evidence that the CIA and FBI may have been less than candid with the commission have added to the questions surrounding the assassination and have led to more calls for reopening the inquiry.

The Mexico City trip was given scant treatment in the Warren commission report.

In response to inquiries from the New York Times, the CIA would not confirm that there were any tape-recorded conversations, but said:

"On Oct. 9, 1963, CIA headquarter received information that a person named Lee Oswald contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City in late September or early October, 1963. In transmitting the information on Oct. 10, 1968, CIA headquarters said Lee Oswald was probably identical to Lee Henry Oswald, a former radar operator in the U.S. Marine Corps, born Oct. 18, 1939, in New Orleans who defected to the Soviet Union in 1959 and who subsequently made arrangements to return to the United States with a Russian wife . . ."

Sources familiar with the contents of the tapes said that Oswald was seeking a transit visa from Cuban officials and that he was "rebuffed." One source said that the call to the Soviet embassy was an effort to get help from the Soviets in furthering his application at the Cuban embassy.

These sources said there was no "conspiratorial" tone to the conversations. One source called the conversations "benign."

Asked if anything said may have "triggered" Oswald, who was a Cuban supporter, to take "retaliation" against Mr. Kennedy, one source denied it, but said that Oswald was "frustrated" by the Cubans.

A survey of Warren commission, Rockefeller commission, intelligence and congressional sources revealed, however, that there are still two areas of suspicion concerning Kennedy's assassination. One is that Oswald received some sort of indirect support or inspiration in his plot and the other is that the CIA and the FBI may not have been fully candid with the Warren commission.

These doubts have deepened in the last nine months as the CIA's role in plots to kill foreign leaders came under scrutiny.

Members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence have confirmed, for instance, that the CIA did not tell the Warren commission of its efforts during the early 1960s to kill Fidel Castro, premier of Cuba.

New York Times

NY Times did not carry in the editior received.